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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
7 April 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Syria-Israeli Situation

1. A major clash between Syria and Israel developed this morning in an area south of Lake Tiberias.
2. Syrian troops opened fire with automatic weapons at approximately 0945 local time (0245 EST) against Israeli armored tractors working fields near the village of Haon, on the lake shore. This area is in the Demilitarized Zone, where Israeli cultivation "rights" have long been hotly disputed by the Syrians. When the Israelis responded to this fire, the Syrians escalated with tank and mortar fire. The Israelis followed in kind. In this phase of the action, the Syrians claim to have damaged two Israeli tanks, while the Israelis claim the destruction of one Syrian tank.
3. Both sides then scrambled jet fighters. An Israeli spokesman has stated that Israeli Mirages strafed several Syrian gun positions in the area of ground fighting before the Israeli aircraft were attacked by Syrian MIG-21's. Eye-witnesses in Damascus, 70 miles to the north, have reported a dogfight over the city, during which an unidentified plane was probably hit. The Syrians claim to have downed at least one Mirage, but the Israelis say they lost no aircraft. An Israeli defense official now claims that the Israelis downed seven Syrian MIG-21's in a 30-minute span. According to an earlier Israeli press service release, claiming six Syrian planes, three fell within Syria and three inside Jordanian territory.

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4. Early efforts by UN truce observers to halt the fighting were unsuccessful, and mortar fire continued for several hours. There is no word as yet whether either party has called for Security Council action, but night fell at approximately 7 PM local time (1200 EST) and the fighting has probably died down for the day.

5. The terrain along the Syrian-Israeli border almost prohibits a major Israeli ground attack into Syrian territory. Given the Israeli air success today as well as the fact that the Jewish Sabbath began at sundown this afternoon, it seems unlikely that the Israelis would initiate further air strikes on their own, although the unpredictable Syrians may still provoke further action. Dawn will break at about 0630 local time (2330 EST tonight). The Israelis seem to have proved their military superiority for the moment and the Syrians are unlikely to attract any meaningful help from their Arab friends.

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